

## 4.2 DIRECT EFFECTS TO THE SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

### 4.2.1 Effects to Social Environment

#### 4.2.1.1 Residential Properties/Relocations

There are various ways that road improvements can impact residential properties. Some of these impacts follow:

- Land Requirements

All alternatives, with the exception of the No-build Alternative, would require the acquisition of residential property. The greatest residential impacts would occur where the proposed alignments parallel the existing corridor. Off-alignment alternatives would also cause residential relocations but to a lesser extent. Residential relocations are subject to Chapter 32 of the Wisconsin Statutes as well as the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. These regulations help to ensure landowners are paid fair market value for their properties. They also detail a set of procedures that safeguard the landowner's rights to fair compensation for the properties acquired.

- Relocation Requirements

A residential relocation occurs when an improvement action does not allow the continued occupation of the home or building. Two situations cause residential relocations. The first occurs when the road improvement project needs to physically occupy the space where the home is located. The second occurs when the US 8 improvement physically alters the property, or access to the property, in such a way that continued use is not possible. Both types of relocations occur with the alternatives under consideration.

Residential acquisitions and relocations will be completed in accordance with the "Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act), as amended." In addition to providing for payment of "Just Compensation" for property acquired, additional benefits are available to eligible displaced persons forced to relocate from their residence. Some available benefits include relocation advisory services, reimbursement of moving expenses, replacement housing payments, and down payment assistance. In compliance with Wisconsin state law, no person would be displaced unless a comparable replacement dwelling would be provided. Federal law also requires that decent, safe, and sanitary replacement dwelling must be made available before any residential displacement can occur.

Compensation is available to all displaced persons without discrimination. Before initiating property acquisition activities, property owners would be contacted and given an explanation of the details of the acquisition process and Wisconsin's Eminent Domain Law under Section 32.05, Wisconsin Statutes. Any property to be acquired would be inspected by one or more professional appraisers. The property owner would be invited to accompany the appraiser during the inspection to ensure the appraiser is informed of every aspect of the property. Property owners will be given the opportunity to obtain an appraisal by a qualified appraiser that will be considered by WisDOT in establishing just compensation. Based on the appraisal(s) made, the value of the property would be determined, and the amount offered to the owner.

- Change in Access

All of the build alternatives would include changes in access for some residential properties through the reduction or relocation of driveways, frontage roads, and/or side roads.

- Summary of Impacts

The majority of impacts would occur as land acquisition adjacent to the roadway. In some instances, the improvements would require the acquisition of land where a home is located or the closure of

access to a home, requiring relocation of the residents. Table 4.2.1.1-1 presents an estimate of the residences impacted by each alternative.

Table 4.2.1.1-1

## Residential Impacts

Segment	Alternative	Residential Relocations	Estimated Acquisition Costs
<b>I</b> <b>(200th Street to 120th Street)</b>	Deer Lake On-alignment	26	3,763,000
	Deer Lake Southern Realignment	21	3,155,500
	Deer Lake Far Southern Realignment	19	2,759,000
<b>II</b> <b>(120th Street to County E)</b>	Apple River/Clover Lake On-alignment	14	1,706,500
<b>III</b> <b>(County E to 50th Street)</b>	Range On-alignment	21	3,595,000
	Range Northern Realignment	6	1,520,500
	Range Southern Realignment	5	1,370,000
<b>IV</b> <b>(50th Street to 15th Street)</b>	Joel Flowage On-alignment	8	1,354,500
	Joel Flowage Northern Realignment	6	879,500
<b>V</b> <b>(15th Street to 5th Street)</b>	Turtle Lake Alternative 1 (Short South Bypass)	11	1,501,000
	Turtle Lake Alternative 2 (Long South Bypass)	7	1,092,500
	Turtle Lake Alternative 3 (North Bypass)	11	1,726,500
	Turtle Lake Alternative 4 (Through-town)	8	1,191,000
<b>VI</b> <b>(5th Street to Sweeny Pond Creek)</b>	Poskin On-alignment	24	2,527,000
	Poskin Southern Realignment	10	1,241,000
<b>VII</b> <b>(Sweeny Pond to US 53)</b>	Barron Alternative A (Short South Bypass)	10	1,837,000
	Barron Alternative B (Long South Bypass)	11	2,022,000
	Barron Alternative C (North Bypass)	7	1,294,500
	Barron Alternative D (Through-town)	44	5,021,500

A Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan (CSRP) was prepared as part of this project (see Appendix G). Because of the time difference between when the EIS was initiated and the end of the Tier I EIS, relocations were reevaluated. The information within the EIS document reflects the latest relocation and cost estimates from the later evaluation, and differs slightly from that of the initial CSRP. In addition, information was gathered on the availability of current rental and owner-occupied replacement housing. Local newspapers and the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) were reviewed to determine the availability of replacement housing. The findings on rental availability are summarized in Table 4.2.1.1-2. Owner-occupied housing availability in and around the village of Turtle Lake is summarized in Table 4.2.1.1-3. Owner-occupied housing availability in and around the city of Barron is summarized in Table 4.2.1.1-4.

Table 4.2.1.1-2

## Rental Availability in the Project Study Area

Monthly Rent	Number of Bedrooms			
	1	2	3	4 or More
\$200-299	1	-	-	-
\$300-399	3	-	-	-
\$400-499	-	5	1	-
\$500-599	-	3	1	-
\$600-699	-	-	1	-
\$700-799	-	-	-	-

Table 4.2.1.1-3

## Turtle Lake Area Replacement Housing Availability

Asking Price	Number of Bedrooms			
	1	2	3	4 or More
\$80,000 – 99,999	-	1	7	1
\$100,000 – 124,999	1	-	3	1
\$125,000 – 144,999	-	2	2	1
\$150,000 – 174,999	-	3	-	2
\$175,000 – 199,999	-	1	-	-
\$200,000 – 250,000	-	6	3	1

Table 4.2.1.1-4

## Barron Area Replacement Housing Availability

Asking Price	Number of Bedrooms			
	1	2	3	4 or More
\$80,000 – 99,999	1	-	3	2
\$100,000 – 124,999	-	1	2	1
\$125,000 – 144,999	-	2	1	3
\$150,000 – 174,999	-	-	3	-
\$175,000 – 199,999	-	-	1	1
\$200,000 – 250,000	-	-	1	-

## 4.2.1.2 Neighborhoods, Community Groupings

Outside of the city of Barron and village of Turtle Lake, most housing in the project study area is on large parcels. However, there are a few clusters or groupings of homes in areas along the corridor including the shorelines of Deer Lake, Upper Turtle Lake, and Lower Turtle Lake and the unincorporated communities of Range and Poskin. The following section summarizes these groupings and potential impacts of the various alternatives to these homes.

## 1. Segment I

Deer Lake: The On-alignment Alternative would not substantially impact the homes surrounding Deer Lake as the new facility would be shifted south of the existing road. The southern realignment would move traffic farther from the homes. In both instances, the existing US 8 roadway would remain in place to serve as a local access road.

## 2. Segment II

No neighborhood groups would be affected in this segment.

## 3. Segment III:

Range: The on-alignment alternative would directly impact 21 homes in the community. Both the northern and southern realignments would move the highway away from the homes, reducing traffic through the area. The northern realignment would impact six residences and the southern realignment would impact five residences. The existing US 8 roadway would remain in place to provide local access.

## 4. Segment IV

No neighborhood groups would be affected in this segment

#### 5. Segment V

Village of Turtle Lake: Alternative 4 (Through-town) would directly impact eight homes. Access would be substantially changed through the village.

Upper Turtle Lake: All of the build alternatives would move traffic away from the homes surrounding Upper Turtle Lake.

Lower Turtle Lake: Alternative 2 moves the highway closer to the homes surrounding Lower Turtle Lake.

#### 6. Segment VI

Poskin: The on-alignment alternative would directly impact several homes in the community. The southern realignment would move the highway away from the homes, reducing traffic through the area. The existing US 8 roadway would provide local access.

#### 7. Segment VII

City of Barron: Alternative D (Through-town) would directly impact 44 homes. Access would be substantially changed through the city.

### 4.2.1.3 Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, dated February 11, 1994, requires each federal agency, to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law, to achieve environmental justice by identifying and addressing disproportionately high or adverse impacts to minority and/or low-income populations as a result of a proposed project. The executive order also requires that representatives of any low-income and minority populations that could be affected by the project in the community be given the opportunity to be included in the impact assessment and public involvement process.

Section 3.2.1.1 presents demographic information for each jurisdiction within the project study area and shows minority populations that are below the state averages. The public involvement process, as described in Section 7.0, attempted to involve all corridor residents, including minorities and low-income residents.

Turtle Lake Alternative 4, the Through-town route, would impact one St. Croix Chippewa building on the south side of US 8 across from the casino. This building is an accessory building to casino operations and would be acquired as part of Alternative 4. In addition, Alternative 4 would require strip right-of-way acquisition from tribal lands to accommodate the expanded facility through the village of Turtle Lake.

As documented in Section 3.2.1.1, many of the communities in the project study area have populations with an income that falls below the poverty level. Based on windshield surveys, public outreach efforts, and conversations with local government administrators, it does not appear that these communities have any specific areas or districts with clusters of poverty-level populations.

Based on the information collected, it can be determined that the project corridor does not disproportionately impact any concentrations of minority or low-income populations. The impacts of the proposed improvements, both beneficial and adverse, would be distributed along the entire corridor and not disproportionately borne by any defined population.

### 4.2.1.4 Community Facilities, Utilities, and Emergency Services

#### A. Schools

The project area is served by five school districts; however, none of these districts or schools within the districts would be directly impacted by any of the proposed improvements.

All of the build alternatives would positively impact the school bus system. Safety improvements on the highway would benefit bus operation and safety. The four-lane divided highway would allow one lane of traffic to pass stopped buses that are picking up or dropping off passengers. Bus routes may be temporarily affected by construction of the build alternatives on the existing alignment as many bus routes travel on US 8 for a portion of their trips.

The No-build Alternative would adversely affect school bus operation by failing to address congestion and safety issues along US 8. The two-lane highway requires both directions of traffic to stop when a school bus stops, which impacts traffic flow and contributes to congestion and compromises safety.

#### B. Postal Service

Postal service in the project area is provided by three post offices. The build alternatives would benefit postal service by improving traffic flow and safety on US 8. Postal routes that include US 8 may temporarily be impacted by the construction of the build alternatives on the existing alignment.

The No-build Alternative would adversely affect postal service by failing to address congestion and safety issues along US 8 and may ultimately delay mail delivery.

Currently, some homeowners have mailboxes on opposite side of US 8 from their homes. This requires them to walk across the facility to collect their mail. The following table documents the number of mailboxes that would need to be relocated based on each of the improvement alternatives.

**Table 4.2.1.4-1**

#### **Homes With Mailboxes on the Opposite Side of US 8**

Segment	Alternative	Number of Homes with Mailboxes on Opposite side of US 8
<b>I</b> <b>(200th Street to 120th Street)</b>	Deer Lake On-alignment	0
	Deer Lake Southern Realignment	0
	Deer Lake Far Southern Realignment	0
<b>II</b> <b>(120th Street to County E)</b>	Apple River/Clover Lake On-alignment	4
<b>III</b> <b>(County E to 50th Street)</b>	Range On-alignment	1
	Range Northern Realignment	0
	Range Southern Realignment	0
<b>IV</b> <b>(50th Street to 15th Street)</b>	Joel Flowage On-alignment	6
	Joel Flowage Northern Realignment	0
<b>V</b> <b>(15th Street to 5th Street)</b>	Turtle Lake Alternative 1 (Short South Bypass)	0
	Turtle Lake Alternative 2 (Long South Bypass)	0
	Turtle Lake Alternative 3 (North Bypass)	0
	Turtle Lake Alternative 4 (Through-town)	0
<b>VI</b> <b>(5th Street to Sweeny Pond Creek)</b>	Poskin On-alignment	8
	Poskin Southern Realignment	0
<b>VII</b> <b>(Sweeny Pond to US 53)</b>	Barron Alternative A (Short South Bypass)	0
	Barron Alternative B (Long South Bypass)	0
	Barron Alternative C (North Bypass)	0
	Barron Alternative D (Through-town)	6

**C. Parks**

Parks within the project corridor include municipal, county, and state parks. Impacts to parks are discussed further in Section 4.1.1.1.

**D. Libraries**

The public libraries in Turtle Lake would not be directly impacted by any of the project alternatives. Alternative D would impact the Carnegie Library in the city of Barron. Based on the current alignment the library would have to be relocated if this alternative were selected for construction.

**E. Social Services**

The senior center in Barron offers meals and activities for elderly residents. Barron and Polk Counties also offer services for area residents, including adult day care, driver refresher courses, in-home respite care, Meals-on-Wheels, senior dining, and incontinence supplies. None of the project alternatives are anticipated to directly impact these social services. Where travel on US 8 is required, services may temporarily be impacted by construction of the build alternatives on the existing alignment.

**F. Government Facilities**

The project alternatives are not anticipated to impact any government facilities along the corridor.

**G. Utilities**

The No-build Alternative would not impact utility service along the corridor.

The build alternatives would require the relocation and disruption of service for some local and regional utility services, except on Segments I, III, and IV. Initial coordination has been made with all utility companies within the project corridor and will continue through the design phase of the preferred alternative.

The build alternatives may also require the acquisition of individual drinking wells and septic drainage fields. Landowners would be compensated for these impacts under eminent domain procedures.

On the west end of the project study area there are several utility poles and lines owned and maintained by Dairyland Power Cooperative. The poles are adjacent to the US 8 corridor and many of the poles would have to be moved to accommodate the expanded right-of-way. Dairyland Power Cooperative estimated the utility pole and line relocation costs by segment. The cost estimates can be found in Table 4.2.1.1-5.

Table 4.2.1.1-5

**Estimated Dairyland Power Cooperative Utility Relocation Cost**

Segment	Alternative	Utility Relocations
I (200th Street to 120th Street)	Deer Lake On-alignment	-
	Deer Lake Southern Realignment	-
	Deer Lake Far Southern Realignment	-
II (120th Street to County E)	Apple River/Clover Lake On-alignment	\$30,000
III (County E to 50th Street)	Range On-alignment	-
	Range Northern Realignment	-
	Range Southern Realignment	\$225,00
IV (50th Street to 15th Street)	Joel Flowage On-alignment	-
	Joe Flowage Northern Realignment	-
V (15th Street to 5th Street)	Turtle Lake Alternative 1 (Short South Bypass)	\$750,000
	Turtle Lake Alternative 2 (Long South Bypass)	\$167,000
	Turtle Lake Alternative 3 (North Bypass)	\$750,000
	Turtle Lake Alternative 4 (Through-town)	\$750,000
VI (5th Street to Sweeny Pond Creek)	Poskin On-alignment	\$1,042,000
	Poskin Southern Realignment	\$1,209,000
VII (Sweeny Pond to US 53)	Barron Alternative A (Short South Bypass)	\$833,000
	Barron Alternative B (Long South Bypass)	\$330,000
	Barron Alternative C (North Bypass)	\$330,000
	Barron Alternative D (Through-town)	\$100,000

Barron Alternatives A and B (Short South Bypass and Long South Bypass) would impact two wastewater treatment ponds on the southeast side of the city of Barron. One is used by the city of Barron and a local manufacturer uses the other. Both ponds are planned for reconstruction in the next 10 years.

#### H. Emergency Service

The No-build Alternative may adversely affect emergency fire, ambulance, hospital, and law enforcement service in two ways. First, travel time may be compromised because of slower traffic speeds, inadequate passing opportunities, and roadway failure during peak traffic periods. Travel safety may also diminish as gap distances decrease and traffic volumes increase. These conditions may lead to additional crashes that would require additional emergency responses and that would decrease the availability of these resources for other emergencies.

All of the build alternatives are anticipated to improve emergency service along the corridor by improving traffic flow and correcting safety issues. The improved highway should result in a decrease in crashes, which would make these emergency services available for other area demands. Adequate access for emergency vehicles to all areas would be maintained under all build alternatives.

#### 4.2.1.5 Work Force

The No-build Alternative may negatively impact the work force in the area by increasing travel times for employees as traffic volumes grow and congestion increases.

The build alternatives may influence the area's economy by:

1. Increasing short-term construction jobs: If a build alternative is selected, a substantial amount of state and federal dollars would be directed to the project study area for highway construction. The road construction would require laborers, some of whom would be local residents.
2. Decreasing farm productivity: Many of the bypass alignments sever or otherwise affect area farms. As farm productivity decreases, other employment opportunities may become more

attractive for area farmers and agricultural workers. This could cause a workforce shift away from agriculture into other employment sectors.

3. Increasing economic vitality: US 8 build alternatives would improve accessibility to area businesses and indirectly encourage this area's economic development. Healthy economies require workers; therefore the build alternatives may increase the corridor's employment need.
4. Diverting traffic patterns: All of the bypass alignments would divert traffic away from the existing alignment in the village of Turtle Lake and city of Barron. With these alternatives, about a third of the through-traffic would be diverted to the bypass routes. Businesses that rely on traffic visibility and/or drive-by purchases could experience reduced patronage. The loss of customer patronage could result in a reduction of employment opportunities.

#### 4.2.1.6 Tax Base

The US 8 project could potentially influence two types of taxes: state and federal income tax and property tax. Income tax is directly influenced by workforce employment and business profitability. Workforce employment is discussed in the previous section (Section 4.2.1.5). Effects to the economic environment are discussed in Section 4.2.2.

The No-build Alternative does not require the removal of any land from the tax roll. Therefore, the No-build Alternative affects jurisdictional revenue the least of all the considered alternatives. However, the No-build Alternative does not address the growing congestion and safety problems within the corridor. Eventually, the growing problems may make the US 8 corridor less attractive economically and result in decreased property tax revenues. Capital investment in the corridor may decrease with these conditions. Since property tax revenues are directly related to property values, decreased investment will result in decreased revenues.

Initially the build alternatives will cause a net reduction of taxable properties as land is acquired to accommodate the highway facility and thus is removed from the tax rolls. To compensate for the lost revenue, the local mill rate may increase or the communities may become eligible for additional shared revenue payments from the state. The 2003 taxable property values for project study area communities are shown in Table 4.2.1.6-1.

**Table 4.2.1.6-1**

#### **2002 Taxable Property Values<sup>5</sup>**

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>2002 Taxable Property Values (\$)</b>
Town of Almena	110,417,200
Town of Apple River	105,444,700
Town of Balsam Lake	166,457,500
Town of Barron	40,483,200
Town of Beaver	73,445,500
Town of Clayton	51,548,600
Town of Clinton	43,008,500
Town of Maple Grove	33,526,300
Town of St. Croix Falls	118,998,300
Town of Stanley	125,859,300
Town of Turtle Lake	28,799,500
Village of Almena	20,900,800
Village of Turtle Lake	41,229,800
City of Barron	117,754,700

<sup>5</sup> Wisconsin Department of Revenue; Town, Village, and City Taxes; <http://www.dor.state.wi.us/pubs/slf/02tvc.pdf>; 2002.



The loss of taxable property is likely to be most strongly felt in the rural towns, where the bypass alternatives may be constructed, and in the city of Barron and village of Turtle Lake, if the Through-town alternatives were constructed. The towns would lose taxable property, primarily agricultural land to accommodate the bypass corridor. Turtle Lake Alternative 4 (Through-town) would require the acquisition of one business and eight residences. Barron Alternative D (Through-town) would require the acquisition of 17 businesses and 44 residences.

In summary, right-of-way required for the build alternatives would be removed from the property tax rolls, decreasing local revenues. However, enhanced commercial development opportunities resulting from the highway improvements would likely offset this decrease. Improved transportation service may increase the economic attractiveness of the corridor, increasing capital investment and raising taxable property values.

#### **4.2.2 Effects to Economic Environment**

The proposed improvements to US 8 may impact the area's economic environment both positively and negatively. Direct impacts to the local area would include commercial relocations, access changes, and traffic diversion. Indirect effects to the economic climate include improving access, improving travel service, and improving commercial vitality. This section addresses the direct effects to the economic climate caused by the alignments under consideration. Section 4.3.3.1 details the indirect effects the project may have on the economic climate.

Right-of-way acquisition for the majority of the build alternatives would impact commercial property and involve the relocation or loss of several businesses along the corridor. This could marginally affect the overall tax base, as well as employment opportunities. However, the improved highway may attract new businesses that would compensate for such losses.

US 8 improvements would have many direct effects to the commercial sector of the corridor. These effects include:

- **Land Requirements and Acquisition**

Many of the build alternatives would require outright commercial property acquisition or strip taking of right-of-way. The alternatives that would have the largest commercial impacts are Deer Lake On-alignment, Deer Lake Southern Realignment, Poskin On-alignment, and Barron Alternative D as shown in Table 4.2.2-1.

All business and commercial property acquisitions are subject to Chapter 32 of the Wisconsin Statutes and The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended. These regulations help ensure business owners are paid fair market value for their properties. They also detail a set of procedures that safeguard a business owner's right to fair compensation.

Table 4.2.2-1

<b>Business Relocations</b>			
<b>Segment</b>	<b>Alternative</b>	<b>Business Relocations</b>	<b>Estimated Acquisition Costs</b>
<b>I (200th Street to 120th Street)</b>	Deer Lake On-alignment	13	4,018,000
	Deer Lake Southern Realignment	4	2,210,000
	Deer Lake Far Southern Realignment	4	2,210,000
<b>II (120th Street to County E)</b>	Apple River/Clover Lake On-alignment	6	1,100,000
<b>III (County E to 50th Street)</b>	Range On-alignment	3	1,020,000
	Range Northern Realignment	1	1,000,000
	Range Southern Realignment	0	0
<b>IV (50th Street to 15th Street)</b>	Joel Flowage On-alignment	2	26,750
	Joel Flowage Northern Realignment	1	10,000
<b>V (15th Street to 5th Street)</b>	Turtle Lake Alternative 1 (Short South Bypass)	0	0
	Turtle Lake Alternative 2 (Long South Bypass)	0	0
	Turtle Lake Alternative 3 (North Bypass)	1	255,000
	Turtle Lake Alternative 4 (Through-town)	1	255,000
<b>VI (5th Street to Sweeny Pond Creek)</b>	Poskin On-alignment	19	3,948,500
	Poskin Southern Realignment	14	2,726,000
<b>VII (Sweeny Pond to US 53)</b>	Barron Alternative A (Short South Bypass)	3	895,000
	Barron Alternative B (Long South Bypass)	3	895,000
	Barron Alternative C (North Bypass)	1	385,000
	Barron Alternative D (Through-town)	17	3,769,500

■ Relocation Requirements

A business relocation would occur if the US 8 improvement would not allow the continued operation of the business. Two mechanisms typically cause business relocations. The first occurs when the US 8 improvement needs to physically occupy the same space where the business is located. The second occurs when the US 8 improvement physically alters the property, or access to the property, in such a way that continued operation is not possible. Both of these types of relocations occur with the alignments being considered. Business relocations are also subject to both Chapter 32 of The Wisconsin Statutes and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition policy Act of 1970, as amended. These regulations, while requiring just compensation, also require that businesses be provided with relocation services.

Under state law, no business may be displaced by a state project unless provided with a comparable replacement, business location, or other compensation in lieu of a suitable replacement. Compensation is available to all displaced persons and businesses without discrimination. Property/business owners will be informed of the acquisition process and the Eminent Domain Law, Chapter 32.05, Wisconsin Statutes prior to any acquisition activities. Property values will be determined by a professional appraiser and property/business owners will be invited to accompany the appraiser during the inspection. Under Chapter 32.05, property/business owners also have the right to obtain their own appraisal, the cost of which will be paid by WisDOT within certain timeframes. After the appraisals are completed, an offer would be made to the property/business owners based on the appraised value.

Relocated businesses are eligible for reimbursement of some of the costs associated with relocation, including moving costs and replacement location costs, comparable replacement location, or other compensation in lieu of moving and reestablishment costs. When relocation is required, all eligible expenses such as moving expenses, increased mortgage costs, closing costs, and relocation costs may be reimbursed by the state when conditions are met.

- Changes in Access

All of the build alternatives would include changes in access for some business properties through the reduction or relocation of driveways, frontage roads, and/or side roads. Many of these access changes may help the business by improving the operation and safety of the roadway. Safe entry and exit from the business may make the business more attractive to customers. However, some access changes on US 8 may also inconvenience customer access to the property because of redirection.

- Traffic Diversion

WisDOT's Economic Planning and Development Section completed an economic impact analysis of the proposed US 8 improvements<sup>6</sup>. Their findings suggest that the area businesses that rely on US 8 traffic for visibility and customers are the most likely to be impacted by the Barron and Turtle Lake bypass routes. In Barron, 48 percent of the customers at five of six local businesses surveyed through an origin/destination (OD) study come from greater than 15 miles (24 km) away. This suggests that highway-dependent traffic is a major component of their revenue base. The OD study results also suggest that the bypass routes would negatively impact highway-dependent businesses.

Other area enterprises are destination-oriented businesses, which means that customers patronize the business for a particular service or product offered. While the construction of the bypass alternatives would divert traffic away from businesses located on the existing alignment, the potential negative impacts are not as great as for the destination-oriented businesses.

The economic impact analysis concluded that government, manufacturing, services, and tourism are the economic sectors that would realize the greatest benefit from the highway improvements. The result of these improvements would be improved product distribution and travel time on a safer facility for workers, suppliers, patrons, and tourists.

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<sup>6</sup> Economic Impact Analysis: US Highway 8, Village of Turtle Lake to City of Barron, Wisconsin. Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Economic Planning and Development Section. January 2004.